(c) India has not signed the Statute of the International Criminal Court as there are several deficiencies in the Statute, including that it brings under the purview of the Court several crimes, which are subject to national jurisdiction, and makes the primacy of national jurisdiction subject to the satisfaction of the Court. It does not include terrorism as a crime against humanity. It gives special and discriminatory powers to the UN Security Council to refer to, or block consideration, by the Court of cases.

Running of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Bus Service without visa and Passport

†1741. SHRI R.S. GAVAI:
SHRIMATI BIMBARAIKAR:
SHRI T.S. BAJWA: SHRI UDAY
PRATAP SINGH: SHRIMATI
SUSHMA SWARAJ:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government of India had agreed to start Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service across LoC from 7th of April;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this journey would require no passport and visa;

(c) if so, the viewpoint of the Government behind such a decision;

(d) the aspects which were kept in mind by the Government before taking such a decision,

(e) whether Government have also taken it into consideration that this system can be misused; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken by Government to tackle any such possible situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (f) The Government of India has agreed to start the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service across the LoC from 7th April, 2005. Travel will be by an entry permit system, after obtaining details of the travellers and verifying their identities and other information,

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

as is normally done for a passport and visa. This travel is open to all Indian and Pakistani nationals.

The Srinagar-Muzaffarabad link would significantly enhance people-to-people contact across the LoC. The LoC is not a recognized international boundary and the system followed does not compromise our position on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. Travel on the bus would be allowed only after due procedure and checks to prevent misuse.

Conditions imposed by Pakistan for new CBMs

1742. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has taken a position that no new Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) will be taken unless the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service is started without passports and visa; and

(b) if so, Government's response in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Shortage of Staff in Visa Division

1743. SHRIMATIVANGAGEETHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Visa Division employees were working even on holidays despite facing severe staff shortage with the workload increasing to manifold;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken/to be taken by the Government to ease the workload of the employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Due to non-cooperative approach of some of the officials in the passport Offices, the pendency had increased, resulting in delays in issue of passports. Nearly, 45000